

# COMMON CHILDHOOD DISEASES: EYES, EARS, NOSE, AND THROAT

Children are prone to illness due to their developing immune systems. Once they begin attending daycare or preschool, they will be exposed to many new viruses and bacteria. This guide contains information on the following childhood illnesses:

- Cold Sores
- Mononucleosis (Mono)
- Pink Eye
- Strep Throat
- Scarlet Fever
- Resources



# COLD SORES

Cold sores are a common infection caused by herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1). Less commonly, it may be caused by herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2).

Cold sores look like tiny, fluid-filled blisters on and around the lips. Some people feel itching, burning, or tingling around the lips for a day or so before the blisters form. The blisters typically group together in patches. After the blisters break, a scab forms. Cold sores typically heal in 2 to 3 weeks without leaving a scar.



In a first time outbreak, the individual may also have a fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and/or swollen lymph nodes.

With following outbreaks, the blisters will generally appear in the same location and be less severe than the first outbreak.



Cold sores are spread through close contact, including kissing, sharing eating utensils, razors and lip balm. They are more likely to spread when the blisters are oozing, however they can still be spread even if no symptoms are present.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 70% of adults carry the virus that causes cold sores, even if they have never experienced any symptoms.



# MONONUCLEOSIS (MONO)

Mononucleosis is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). Diagnosis is usually made based on symptoms and a physical exam. Lab tests are available, but typically not done.

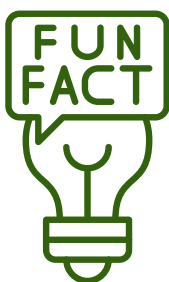
Symptoms include extreme fatigue, sore throat, fever, headache, body aches, weakness, loss of appetite, swollen lymph nodes in the neck, and rash. Symptoms appear 4-6 weeks after exposure, and can last for a couple of weeks. Tiredness and weakness may persist for 2-3 months.



Mono is spread through direct contact with saliva. This can happen through kissing, sharing eating/drinking utensils, and even through sharing lipstick or lip balm.



Treatment for mono is usually done at home. Individuals need to get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. A salt water gargle may help the sore throat. Over the counter medications such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen can help ease discomforts.



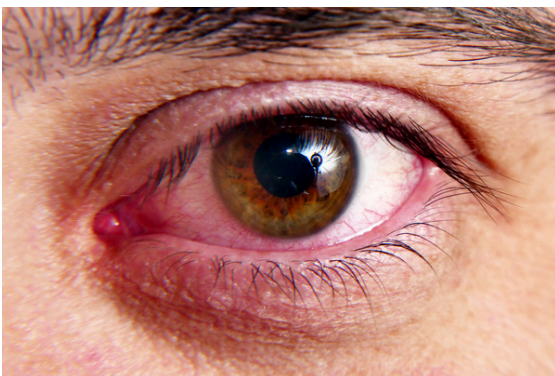
Mononucleosis is sometimes referred to as the "kissing disease."



# PINK EYE

Pink eye is an infection of the thin, clear lining that covers the inside of the eyelid and white part of the eye. Pink eye can have several different causes, including viruses, bacteria, allergens, and irritants such as smoke or dust.

Symptoms usually include redness or swelling of one or both eyes, itchiness, irritation, discharge, watery eyes, and crusting of the eyelids or lashes. Symptoms typically improve in 2 to 5 days without treatment. Your doctor may prescribe eye drops or an ointment for pink eye that is caused by bacteria.



Pink eye is extremely contagious. It can spread from person to person through physical contact, poor hygiene, or use of contaminated items such as towels and makeup.

To prevent yourself and others from getting pink eye:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Do not touch or rub your eyes
- Do not share personal items such as eye drops, makeup, and contact lenses and containers
- Follow your eye doctor's recommendations for cleaning and storage of contact lenses

**Children with pink eye do NOT need to be excluded from school, unless a fever is present.**





# STREP THROAT

Strep throat is an infection in the throat caused by a bacteria called group A strep. It is more common in children than adults, and is rarely seen in children under 3 years of age.

Common symptoms of strep throat include fever, pain when swallowing, sore throat, red and swollen tonsils, white patches or streaks of pus on the tonsils, tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth, and swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck. Children may have other symptoms, including cough, runny nose, hoarse voice, and pink eye.



**Stay home from school or child care** until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **AND** until it has been at least 12 hours since antibiotics were started.

Complications can occur if the bacteria spread to other parts of the body. This can happen if antibiotics are not begun in a timely manner. Possible complications include:

- Abscess (infection) around the tonsils or in the neck
- Sinus infection
- Ear infection
- Rheumatic fever
- Kidney Disease



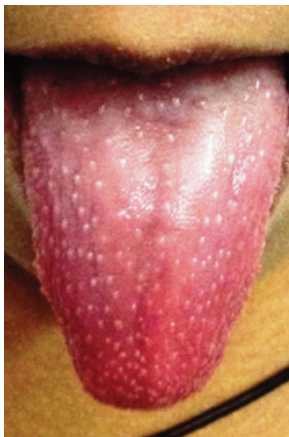
Some people infected with group A strep do not show any symptoms. People that do have symptoms are more contagious than those without symptoms.



# SCARLET FEVER

Scarlet fever is caused by the same type of bacteria that causes strep throat: group A strep. Sometimes these bacteria release a toxin that travels through the bloodstream and causes a rash.

Symptoms of scarlet fever include white coating on the tongue, painful swallowing, headache, body aches, stomach pain, nausea/vomiting, and fever or chills. Later in the illness, the tongue may become red and bumpy, often referred to as "strawberry tongue." Sometimes a red, rough rash appears 1-2 days after the illness begins. The rash first appears on the neck, underarms, and groin then spreads over the whole body. As the rash fades, the skin may peel around the fingers, toes, and groin.



Scarlet fever is more common in children than adults, particularly children between the ages of 5 and 15 years old. It is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing, and through sharing eating and drinking utensils. People can get scarlet fever more than once.



**Stay home from school or child care** until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **AND** until it has been at least 12 hours since antibiotics were started.

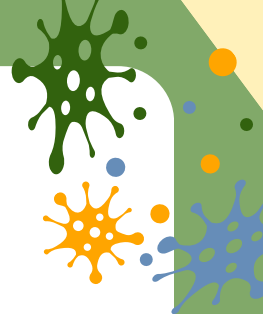


Scarlet fever must be treated with antibiotics. It is important to finish the antibiotics, even if you start to feel better.





# RESOURCES



**For more information, please visit:**

- [WI Department of Health Services: Childhood Communicable Diseases](#)
- [WI Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart](#)
- [WI Childhood Communicable Diseases: Eyes, Ears, Nose, and Throat](#)



- [Cold Sores \(Mayo Clinic\)](#)
- [Mononucleosis \(CDC\)](#)
- [Pink Eye \(CDC\)](#)
- [Strep Throat \(CDC\)](#)
- [Scarlet Fever \(CDC\)](#)



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